



Montgomery County Council

From the Office of Councilmember Roger Berliner

August 13, 2010

Contact: 240-777-7828

Maryland Public Service Commission to Investigate 'Reliability of Pepco'

**Following More Power Outages, State's Regulatory Agency to
Act in Accordance of Request of Montgomery County Council
Starting With Hearing on Tuesday, Aug. 17, in Baltimore**

ROCKVILLE, Md., August 13, 2010—Following morning and afternoon summer storms on Aug. 12 that left 32,000 Montgomery County residents without electric power as of 11 a.m. today, the Maryland Public Service Commission (PSC) has announced that it will initiate "a proceeding to investigate the reliability of Potomac Electric Power Company's (Pepco) electric distribution system and the quality of electric distribution service that Pepco is providing its customers." On July 29, following a storm that left more than 200,000 residents without power, the Montgomery County Council, at the urging of Councilmember Roger Berliner, unanimously sent a letter to the Public Service Commission asking for just such an investigation.

The Public Service Commission has ordered Pepco's chief operating officer and the company's senior officers responsible for system reliability and construction of maintenance, storm restoration and customer service and communications to appear at a "legislative-type hearing" at 9:30 a.m. on Tuesday, Aug. 17, in the commission's 16th floor hearing room at the William Donald Schaefer Tower at 6 Saint Paul Street in Baltimore.

"I am gratified that the regulators in charge of Pepco did exactly what our County Council asked them to do—open an investigation into Pepco's reliability," said Councilmember Berliner, who is the Council's Lead Member for Energy and Environment on its Transportation, Infrastructure, Energy and Environment Committee. "The Commission appears to recognize that the poor quality of service we have been getting is simply not acceptable. As the order notes, it is not just during storms that we experience outages, but

N
E
W
S

R
E
L
E
A
S
E

there are also ‘frequent and apparently inexplicable outages occurring outside of storm events.’ These ongoing outages and the failure of Pepco to provide better customer service, including accurate and timely information, poses a direct threat to our quality of life, drains our constituents financially and physically, and harms our County’s competitiveness and economy. It is time for action, and the Commission’s order is a welcome first step in that direction.”

The Commission’s order stated the investigation was being initiated “because of the frequency, number and duration of the power outages experienced by customer in the Pepco service area and the apparent breakdown of adequate communication between the company and its customer during these outage events.” He went on to write, “The Commission finds it necessary to conduct an immediate investigation into the reliability of the Pepco distribution system and the quality of distribution service Pepco is providing its customers, including but not limited to its performance during and following severe storms, and a comprehensive examination of Pepco’s storm preparedness and reliability.”

The County Council’s letter of July 29 asking for an investigation cited many of the same concerns the PSC identified in deciding to act. In their letter, Councilmembers wrote: “We are writing to ask the Commission to open an investigation into the reliability of electricity in Pepco’s Montgomery County’s service territory. Our residents and businesses have suffered an unacceptable number and duration of outages for many years, outages that have harmed public health, public safety and the County’s economy. As a distribution-only utility, the quality and reliability of Pepco’s service is exclusively within your authority. We ask you to invoke that authority to ensure our citizens of acceptable levels of reliability.”

###